



Miami-Dade County Health Department

Contact: Olga Connor
Rosa Oses-Prealoni
(786) 336-1276
olga_connor@doh.state.fl.us
rosa_oses@doh.state.fl.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PR-055

Health Advisory Related to the Recent Sewage Spill

(Miami, FL—June24, 2010) – The Miami-Dade County Health Department continues to advise residents to avoid contact with the water including swimming and recreational activities in the areas under advisory.

Residents are advised not to eat fish from these areas.

Individuals with health concerns should contact their medical provider.

For information, please call 305-324-2400 or visit www.dadehealth.org

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Contact: Olga Connor
Rosa Oses-Prealoni
(786) 336-1276
(305)970-2556
olga_connor@doh.state.fl.us
rosa_oses@doh.state.fl.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PR-056

**ADVISORY REGARDING
FISH KILLS RELATED TO THE RECENT SEWER SPILL**

(MIAMI, June 24, 2010)-Some dead fish have been observed in the areas affected by the recent sewer spill in Miami-Dade County.

The Miami-Dade County Health Department is requesting that residents report fish kills.

Health Concerns:

General guidelines for areas with fish kills:

- Do not eat, collect, or use fish or crabs that were found dead or dying, or from areas where distressed or dead fish are present.
- Do not let pets swim in or drink from water in the vicinity. If your pets come in contact with water, immediately wash their fur thoroughly with soap and clean water.
- Items that have come in contact with affected waters should be thoroughly washed with soap and clean water or disinfected with a bleach solution (mix ¼ cup of household bleach per gallon of water and immerse for 15 minutes) prior to continuing their use.
- Contact your physician if you believe you have become ill as a result of consuming or being exposed to affected waters.

Reporting a Fish Kill:

The Fish and Wildlife Health Group at the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) Fish and Wildlife Research Institute (FWRI) has a toll-free hotline for reporting the locations of fish kills and/or diseased or abnormal fish. Callers should leave a brief message describing the location of the event and the number and species of

Disease Risks and Sewage Exposure

Raw sewage can contain certain biological agents such as bacteria, viruses, and parasites. However, the risk of illness depends on the type and the duration of exposure to the sewage. The most common mode of infection is through oral contact. Skin contact alone does not pose a health threat unless you have an open wound. The risk of exposure when handling sewage can be **reduced significantly** by effective and immediate clean-up and by taking appropriate safety precautions

Some biologic agents in sewage

Bacteria (examples: E. coli, salmonella) may cause diarrhea, fever, cramps, or vomiting.

Parasite (example: giardia) may cause diarrhea, and stomach cramps

Viruses

- Hepatitis A causes liver disease. You may feel abdominal pain, nausea, jaundice (yellow skin) or diarrhea. The CDC says sewage workers are **not** at more risk of hepatitis A infection than other workers.
- Hepatitis B causes liver disease. You may have jaundice (yellow skin), abdominal pain, or nausea. The disease has **not** been linked to exposure to sewage in the U.S.
- Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) causes AIDS. There are **no** known cases of wastewater workers getting HIV from their jobs in the U.S. and **the risk is virtually nonexistent**

Safety Precautions

- Assume anything touched by sewage is contaminated.
- Do not eat or drink or smoke in sewage handling areas.
- Wash hands well with soap and clean water before eating or touching mouth or face.
- Wash hands with soap and clean water after touching any surfaces or objects that may have been contaminated.
- Do not touch your nose, mouth, eyes or ears with your hands, unless you have just washed.
- Immediately wash and disinfect any wound that comes into contact with sewage.
- Shower and change out of your clothes before leaving. Launder clothes separately or discard.
- Vaccinations: If you've been exposed to sewage, you need to be up-to-date on your shots for tetanus and diphtheria (Adults should have had a shot within the last 10 years).
- Contact a doctor immediately if illness occurs



Hand washing steps:

1. Use soap and warm running water.
2. Scrub hands for at least 20 seconds; use a nail brush.
3. Wash all surfaces:
 - Between fingers
 - Under fingernails
 - Back of hands
 - Wrists
4. Rinse well and dry hands with a clean paper towel.